DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 096 843 FL 006 499

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TITLE The Training of Language Teachers: A Look at the Future.
INSTITUTION Hawaii Univ., Honolulu. East-West Center.
PUB DATE Aug 74
NOTE 9p.
JOURNAL CIT Topics in Culture Learning; v2 p129-136 Aug 1974

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS Culture; *Educational Change; *Educational Philosophy; Individualized Instruction; *Language Instruction; *Language Teachers; Linguistics; Programed Instruction; Psychology; Second Language Learning; *Teacher Education; Video Cassette Systems

ABSTRACT

By the year 2000 the prevailing philosophy of education, in Western Europe and North America at least, will contain four major elements: (1) concern for the individual, (2) disapproval of authoritarianism, (3) the expectation of lifelong education, and (4) a sophisticated theoretical learning-teaching model of education. Language is now seen as a useful tool, a vehicle for communication. This attitude can be interpreted as a move away from culture-dependence in language teaching. The next quarter-century is likely to produce a wide range of technological developments based on the inexpensive videotape cassette. The trend toward individualized instruction and the growing demand for self-study materials will lead to a renewed interest in programmed learning. Certain general principles of professional training for language teachers will be detailed by the turn of the century, principles which will define: (1) the parameters of the language teacher's job, (2) the attributes of a teacher, (3) the components of a teacher's special training, (5) standards of training in practical skills, and (6) methods of achieving a realistic program. The relationship between language teaching and the disciplines of linguistics and psychology will be defined. As language teaching develops on its own theoretical bases, the direct reliance of language teachers on linguistics and psychology will wane. We are moving toward a greater understanding of what is actually involved in the complex processes of learning and teaching languages. (PMP)

ED 096843

THE TRAINING OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS: A LOOK AT THE FUTURE

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The year 1975 provides one of the periodical milestones which remind us to assess our progress over the past quarter-century and tempt us to guess at future developments up to the symbolic date of the year 2000. In the realm of teacher training for foreign languages, including the training of teachers of English as a foreign language, the existence of a number of potentially exciting educational ideas has led some people to ask such questions as these: by the year 2000, will languages still be taught by teachers?--to pupils organised in classes? --according to techniques which we would recognise today? Or will the individual learner take his learning at his own time and pace from a system of advanced teaching technology, i.e., a teaching machine? In short, will the language teacher be redundant by the end of the century?

Behind such questions lie a number of trends: the rapid spread of English as an international lingua franca; ideas of 'de-schooling' and similar movements of dissatisfaction with the conventional school, at least in the form which it often takes in large cities; criticism of the effectiveness of conventional school language teaching courses in some countries; a change of emphasis from the techniques of the teacher to the strategies of the learner; suggestions that learners are in fact capable of better and faster learning than they are able to achieve within present teacher-learning frameworks; the encouragement of the use of learners (at all ages) to teach each other; the dislike of an 'authoritarian' attitude to teaching and a search for methods--such as problem-solving, discovery procedures, etc.--which emphasize learning capability rather than teaching capability; the invention of 'teaching systems' and 'learning systems' in which ingenious equipment and specially-prepared materials take the place of the conventional teacher in his traditional classroom. These ideas, and many others, lead some people to believe that an era of major educational change is upon us and will come to pass in the next quarter-century.

In order to lead us towards a better guess as to what is actually possible in the practical circumstances of particular countries, the discussion needs to take account of two vital but quite different kinds of arguments: the first kind of argument is in a sense intellectual, and embodies questions of educational philosophy, attitudes towards language teaching, developments in educational technology, and the acceptance of a body of principles for teacher training; the other kind of argument is basically pragmatic and economic, and it determines how educational advances are related to a country's general level of affluence and economic development.

a) The Intellectual Arguments

i) Developments in Educational Philosophy

By the year 2000 the prevailing philosophy of education, in Western Europe and North America at least, will contain (among others) four major elements: concern for the individual; disapproval of authoritarianism; the expectation of lifelong education; a sophisticated theoretical learning-teaching model of education in general and of subject-teaching--including language teaching--in particular.

Already the notion of individualization in education is becoming widespread in education: its intention is not to provide a separate one-pupil class for each learner, but to ensure as far as possible that the particular needs of each individual--his mental and emotional age, his temperament, his social and cultural development, his preferred rate of learning, his potentiality as an individual--are met. All this represents a major change in the focus of educational attention, and it will take many years to work out realistic and effective ways of putting these ideas into practice.

Similarly, in Western Europe and North America there exists already a climate of anti-authoritarian opinion, against the conventional idea of the teacher as the figure of authority, casting his pearls before the submissive learner. The pupil, too, is an individual, no less to be respected than the teacher; education must now discover how teaching and learning may be conducted without invoking power-relationships between teacher and learner that may be harmful to the personalities of both.

Lifelong education, too, is an exciting new commitment in Europe, as yet far from being fully realized. By the year 2000 it will be taken for granted over most of Western Europe that every individual citizen will be able to call on a range of further educational facilities from time to time throughout his life, instead of assuming that organised learning stops forever when he leaves school at age 16.

The fourth of these developments is going to provide for education, and more especially for instruction, a theoretical basis. For several years, language teachers have been placed in an allegedly inferior position compared with their professional colleagues in linguistics and psychology, on the grounds that whereas these two disciplines have developed for themselves highly-sophisticated theoretical models that aid in understanding their fundamental nature, language teaching by contrast has remained a craft, without well-elaborated theoretical foundations. But recently there have been signs of rapid progress in this direction. In Europe, Canada and the United States, a number of specialists have proposed versions of a 'theory of language learning and language teaching,' indicating what are the fundamental elements of the process and how they are inter-related.[2]

We need to realize that these four developments in educational philosophy which we have mentioned above relate very strongly to a particular cultural outlook on education--roughly, that which is shared by Europe, North and South America, and the Soviet Union. In societies with strong traditions of quite different learning-habits (for example, in societies which rely on the guru or his equivalent) it may prove difficult for these philosophical ideas to gain acceptance. And indeed, we should not assume that these ideas, being Western, are automatically superior. It may well be that by the year 2000 we shall understand better than we do today the relative merits and disadvantages of cultural philosophies other than our own, and be ready to consider making use of ideas from outside our present cultural tradition.

ii) Changes in Attitudes towards the teaching of languages. Fifty years ago almost the only justification for teaching a language was in order eventually to be able to study literature written in that language. Today this has become a comparatively rare

reason, at least as far as pre-university education is concerned. In its place there has arisen the more pragmatic justification that certain languages are useful for the citizen. His aim--or at least, the aim set on his behalf by the public will as manifested through a national educational system--is to acquire some degree of practical command of the language, largely unrelated to the study and appreciation of literature. The objectives of language teaching are to enable the young citizen to use English (or French, Russian, Spanish, German, etc.) as a tool: as a vehicle for comprehension or communication; or as a window on to the modern trans-national world of science, technology, information, entertainment, art or ideas; or for quite specific and restricted needs in his occupation.

This change of attitude can be interpreted as a move away from culture-dependence in language teaching. When we look closely at the underlying purpose of teaching languages so as to study literature, it becomes clear that it was not because (in the case of English) students would enjoy in Dickens' novels a number of rattling good stories, or because Wordsworth's poems would give purely aesthetic pleasure, but because these and other works of English literature are held to embody fundamental moral, social and intellectual values of British culture. In an era when many countries have broken free from colonial tutelage and have begun to develop or re-develop a cultural identity of their own, it was inevitable that the teaching of languages should be desired in a form that increasingly frees itself from dependence, in its choice of texts, upon the precise cultural values of the former colonial masters. This is a complex question which arouses deeply-held passions for and against particular points of view, and I certainly do not wish to suggest that the teaching of foreign languages for the eventual study of literature is 'wrong.' What is difficult to defend is the 'package deal' offering, in which the only foreign language teaching available is mounted on the vehicle of literary studies. Now that literature is no longer the ultimate aim in most pre-university language teaching, it seems likely that the teaching of literature will be more strongly taught, to students for whom this is indeed a desired and genuine interest.

When the eventual aims were literary, the beginner learned the language with the aid of language courses whose stereotype often embodied the domestic life of an English family, perhaps Mr. and Mrs. Jones, their children Jane and Tom, and their dog, Spot. The everyday activities of these characters, which formed the matrix of the learner's experience of the language, pre-figured the cultural attitudes and values of the later study of literature. Nowadays, with the eventual study of literature no longer dominant, two quite distinct attitudes are encountered on the part of overseas authorities, towards the embodiment of language material in a framework of day-to-day British domestic behaviour. One such attitude is that the foreign learner of English does indeed wish to gain some superficial knowledge of British (or American) life and customs, and that therefore Mr. and Mrs. Jones and their dog, Spot, are acceptable as central characters. The other attitude is that the foreign learner has little or no interest in the British or American way of life, since what he seeks is a communication tool for use within his own cultural framework. It would be cynical and untrue to suggest that the reaction to this view on the part of many textbook writers is simply to convert Mr. and Mrs. Jones into Mr. and Mrs. Chang, or Patel, or Otu--the dog is generally suppressed--but the fact remains that in the adaptation of teaching materials to suit the new attitudes the English domestic model dies hard.

One consequence of the reduction in culture-dependence is a somewhat less rigorous attitude towards "nativeness" of performance on the part of the learner. There has always been a difference in this respect between the 'second language' and the 'foreign language' situation: when English has a special place in the courts, or is the medium of instruction in some sections of the school system, and in general occupies a special position of prominence and preference, it is known as a second language; when it has roughly the same status in the community as any other language not indigenous there, it is called a foreign language. On the whole, teachers of English as a second language (ESL) expect to achieve rather higher overall standards of communicative skill, but they also tend more readily to accept deviations from native-speaker

performance (such as local accents). In the foreign language situation, although overall standards actually achieved are somewhat lower, the standards aimed at continue to be those of being "native-like." However, as communicative ability increasingly becomes the object and justification of learning and teaching a language, the criterion of success is whether communication takes place, and not whether the communicator sounded (or wrote) like a native Englishman or American. It seems likely that this tendency away from being native-like will spread: certainly it is consonant with the reduction in direct dependence upon British or American--or any other native English-speaking--culture.

A further change of attitude, originating in this case from psycholinguistic studies of the child's acquisition of his mother tongue, will probably contribute to changes in the language teaching classroom. The change of attitude referred to here concerns the 'errors' which the learner makes in the course of his learning. Conventionally, errors have been regarded by teachers as shortcomings on the part of the learner, to be corrected with varying degrees of severity according to the teacher's judgment of whether the learner was being forgivable, or careless, or delinquent, in making the error in the first place. Now, however, studies of the process by which the infant acquires its mother tongue, and parallel studies of the process of learning a foreign language, suggest very strongly that 'errors' may in fact be indications of progress on the part of the learner and not indications of delinquency. It seems likely that, as he progresses from zero accomplishment in the direction of native-like command of the language, every learner passes through a similar sequence of stages of development, and that this is due to the capacities and limitations of the human brain as a language-learning device.

The hypothesis runs like this: (i) suppose that the normal developmental sequence of grammatical command of English by a young child learning it as his mother tongue may be represented by a sequence such as the following:

DADDY GO -- DADDY GO OFFICE -- DADDY GONE OFFICE --
DADDY GONE TO OFFICE -- DADDY'S GONE TO OFFICE --
DADDY'S GONE TO THE OFFICE.

(ii) Then the sequence of grammatical command of English by any learner, child or adult, learning English as a foreign language, will follow a roughly similar sequence. (iii) Therefore 'deviant' forms such as DADDY GO OFFICE are not shortcomings of behaviour on the part of the learner but are manifestations of the best he can do at that particular stage in his development.

Of course there is much more to the argument than that. Experienced teachers react to the above hypothesis by immediately recognizing an element of truth in it, but at the same time realizing that every learner also makes 'errors' which can be shown to be mis-learnings, forgettings, wild and inaccurate guesses, etc. For the purpose of this article, which is concerned with probable developments in teaching and teacher training, the importance of the current discussion is that it may force upon teachers a realization that the commission of errors is not necessarily a justification for accusing the learner of not learning properly: on the contrary, they may actually be evidence that his learning progress is on its best possible track--milestones on the road to perfection, rather than delinquencies to be punished by the teacher.[3]

iii) Developments in Technology

If the past twenty-five years has been chiefly remarkable, in the realm of teaching technology, for the introduction of the tape recorder, the language lab and audio-visual methods, the next quarter-century is likely to produce a further range of techniques based on the cheap video-tape cassette. The teacher-trainer will have at his command yet another tool whose effective use (and disadvantages) he will need to explain to the trainee. But like the language lab, sophisticated videotape techniques are likely to remain on the fringe of language teaching--icing on the cake, as it were--rather than

become basic teaching methods for the average teacher. And in the realm of technological sophistication lies a great gap between affluent countries and those still working their way through early stages of economic development.

Although the use of expensive technology will not become universal, the incorporation in large-scale teaching courses of sound recordings and of visual illustrations such as slides and films, in addition to printed books, will probably become a normal and accepted shape of published materials. One reason for this is that the recordings can be produced in a variety of forms--gramophone records, spools of tape, cassettes--to suit different degrees of technological affluence, while visuals can similarly be offered as books, posters, wall-charts, film-strips, film-loops, films, videotapes, etc. Educators and publishers alike realize that it is not the multi-media themselves which do very much of the teaching, but that as time passes the expectations of teachers and learners become more sophisticated, and that the better teachers can often achieve better results from the more complex possibilities of multi-media courses.

What of programmed learning, another innovation of the recent past? It is true that the crude application of programming to language teaching produced few successful results, and many disasters. But two new factors will lead to renewed but more selective and delicate attempts to use PL. These factors are, first, the trend towards meeting the precise needs of the individual, and second, a growing demand for self-study materials. The first of these factors creates a requirement for additional, alternative, consolidation or extension teaching materials, some of which can be fully or partly programmed. The second, too, is certain to lead to the incorporation of some programmed segments, where they are appropriate, within a larger body of teaching materials.

Whatever the aids available to the teacher, his range of instructional techniques will be extended. In particular, teaching is going to make more and more use of the learners themselves as teachers, and to incorporate pupil-group techniques.[4] Already the first wave of publications making use of this technique is available[5] and others will certainly follow. Teacher training must prepare the teacher to use this technique successfully--and to know when conditions do not favour it.

iv) The Development of Principles in Teacher Training

It is remarkable how little literature exists on the basic, general principles of professional training for language teachers. The next quarter of a century will see the elaboration and general acceptance of such principles, perhaps along the following lines:

(i) Principles defining the parameters of the job for which a teacher is trained--for example, the individual qualities of the teacher; the individual and group characteristics of the learners he will teach; the nature of education and instruction in general and of teaching a language in particular; and the nature of the constraints which convert an ideal but unattainable programme into a realistic one.

(ii) Principles defining the crucial attributes of a teacher--e.g. his temperament and personality, his level of personal education, his command of the language he is teaching, and his skill as a teacher.

(iii) Principles defining the minimum elements of a teacher's training--the continuation of his personal education; his general professional training as a teacher and an educationist; the special training he needs as a teacher of language; and the imparting of a commitment on his part to keeping abreast of his profession.

(iv) Principles defining the components of the special training as a teacher of language--a component of practical skills (i.e. command of the language,

facility in classroom techniques, and ability as a "manager of learning"); a component of information (i.e. about methodology, about the language he is teaching, about syllabuses in force and materials in use); and, when it is realistically possible, a component of theory (i.e. in linguistics, psychology and the theory of language teaching).

(v) Principles for training in practical skills--including acceptance of the idea that practical skills of teaching should be taught through practical involvement in teaching, including forms of apprenticeship.

(vi) Principles for achieving a realistic programme, by identifying constraints (e.g. shortage of time for training, absence of practice facilities, early stages of national development, etc.) and devising the best teacher training programme that can be achieved in particular conditions.

We have devoted considerable space to this selection of intellectual influences upon the nature of future teaching and teacher training, since developments in the philosophy of education, changes in attitudes towards the teaching of languages, developments in technology and the crystallization of principles of teacher training will make a decisive difference to future education. But will this difference be felt equally in all countries? To answer this question we must turn to arguments concerned with economic development.

b) The Economic Development Arguments

We began this paper by referring to 1975 as a milestone, and by looking ahead to guess what teacher training might be like in 25 years' time. One consequence of considering the year 2000 is that one realizes how close it is. Looking backwards for the same number of years takes us back to 1946: let us assume (in the absence of other indications) that progress in the future will be of the same order as progress in the recent past. Now let us assess the amount of progress since 1946--and immediately we encounter a basic problem of futurology in relation to language teaching. The rate of change, and even the nature of the changes themselves, has varied greatly from one country to another. There are some parts of the world where the teaching of languages has undergone a long series of radical developments and improvements in effectiveness, and where the training of teachers has changed in parallel. In some other areas changes have been few and trivial; while elsewhere the picture is somewhere between these extremes.

If we expect the future rate of change to mirror the past, we arrive at the disturbing prediction that those countries which have changed little in the past 25 years may not change very much in the next 25, either. The concertina will be pulled out even further than it is today.

What determines the rate of change in language teaching? It might seem at first sight that if we knew the answer to that question, and if the answer lay within the range of controllable variables, then it might prove possible to speed up the rate of progress of the countries which have changed least in the past. Then by the year 2000 all countries might have reached the same point of development in their teaching of languages and in the training of teachers. But in fact the most likely reason for the difference in rates of change is indicated by Beeby's analysis of the quality of education in developing countries[6], with language teaching displaying the same characteristics as education in general. If that is so, then it is unlikely that the reform of language teaching can progress at a noticeably faster rate than the reform of education as a whole, in a given national system.

Beeby's overall analysis suggests a progression through four stages: first, a "Dame's School" state of organisation, in which the teachers are ill-educated and untrained, and where the subject-teaching is narrow and unorganised, depending heavily on rote-learning; secondly, a stage of "Formalism", in which the teachers, though still poorly-educated, do receive some training, and the subject teaching follows rigid methods, using "one best method" and one authoritarian textbook; thirdly, a "Transition" stage, in which teachers

are better-educated and trained, though not to the optimum extent, and the subject teaching becomes less restrictive, with more emphasis on meaning and less on memorisation; fourthly, a "Meaning" stage, where well-educated, well-trained teachers teach a more liberal syllabus, employ a variety of content and methods to suit the different needs of different pupils.

This model seems to me a realistic one: it would not be difficult to describe language teaching in every country in terms of these four stages; it seems unlikely that the development of language teaching in a given country can be separated from the development of its total educational system. In that case, our future predictions, if they are to be realistic, must assume that the training of language teachers rests on the basis of national educational development. And consequently it is necessary to assume the various intellectual trends discussed in earlier sections of this paper will reach full development only in those countries which are more responsive to educational change, i.e. those which have reached, or will reach during the coming twenty-five years, a higher level of economic affluence.

Nevertheless, even if it is necessary to place reservations on the generality of many of these developments, there remain a number of predictive guesses which it is reasonable to expect will apply to the bulk of teacher training everywhere: first, teachers will be more rigorously selected for training; second, courses will be longer in duration; third, teachers will have a higher level of personal education; fourth, the methods imparted will be more closely oriented to the needs of the individual pupil and less teacher-centred; and finally, teachers will be trained to expectations of greater effectiveness than they enjoy at present.

One particular issue which has generated a great deal of heat in recent years, and which will doubtless be resolved by the year 2000 is the relationship between language teaching on the one hand and the disciplines of linguistics and psychology on the other. As language teaching develops on its own theoretical bases, so the direct reliance of language teachers on linguistics and psychology will wane, or at least change. But a theory of language teaching will certainly incorporate components of linguistics and psychology in some shape or other, such that their relevance will be assured through a complex integration of ideas, rather than by the somewhat mystical and usually unargued proposition that all language teachers need to be trained in linguistics in order to be better language teachers.

We are in any case moving, it seems to me, towards a more delicate understanding of what is entailed in the learning and teaching of languages, and this understanding includes a realization that far from being a simple operation for which a simple, "unique best method" is appropriate, it is a process of considerable complexity where the specification of the most suitable teaching methods will depend on a large number of factors. It follows from this view that where language teaching is successful, at present, the success reflects a suitable "match" between the complex factors of the total learning-teaching situation, and conversely that where success is low it could be improved by a fuller understanding of all the main factors at work, and a more appropriate choice of methods.

The complexity of the total learning-teaching situation, and thus a model of the language learning-teaching process, includes at least the following elements: (i) the fundamental variables which affect the kind of learning and teaching that are appropriate (e.g. pupil age, the educational aims of the teaching, the standard of proficiency reached, etc.); (ii) a theory of education and instruction, of general learning and language learning, backed by a practical methodology and a range of teaching techniques; (iii) a set of principles for the construction and evaluation of syllabuses; (iv) a set of principles for the construction and evaluation of teaching materials; (v) a theory of testing, assessment and evaluation of achievement; (vi) a set of variables which limit or maximise the learner's success (e.g. quantity and intensity of instruction, the absence of impediments such as fatigue or noise or over-crowding, factors belonging to the learner, factors belonging to the teacher, the relevance of the materials, etc.); (vii) a set of principles regulating the educational policies and administrative decisions within which teaching is organised (e.g. starting age, class size, teacher supply, equipment, etc.); and not least (viii) a set of principles of teacher training as outlined above. The comprehensive theories of language

teaching now being elaborated will by the year 2000 provide the profession with an integrated understanding of the interrelations between these elements.

The reader will have realized that my personal attitude towards teacher training in the year 2000 is one of tempered optimism. Languages will, I am certain, still be taught, because multilingualism will be a normal, expected quality of educated citizens. Teachers will still be facing classes, and will still be receiving training for their profession. And because the teacher trainers will have a much better theoretical understanding of the learning and teaching process, as well as a wider range of practical techniques, we can reasonably hope for greater effectiveness in teaching and learning.

FOOTNOTES

[1]This paper has its origins (although it has been almost totally re-written) in my article 'La formation des professeurs de langues' which appeared in a special issue entitled Vers l'An 2000 (Towards the Year 2000) of the journal Le Francais Dans le Monde, No. 700, October-November 1973. I am grateful to the Culture Learning Institute of the East-West Center, Hawaii, and to its Director and staff, for the opportunity to prepare this and other articles.

[2]E.g. H.H. Stern: Directions in Language Teaching Theory and Research, Report delivered to the Third International Congress of Applied Linguistics, Copenhagen, 1972, (forthcoming). R. Valette and R. Disick: Modern Language Performance Objectives and Individualisation. New York, Harcourt Brace. 1972. P. Strevens: 'Second Language Learning' in Language as a Human Problem, special issue of DAEDALUS, June 1973. B. Spolsky 'Educational Linguistics' in Educational Linguistics, Mouton (forthcoming). S.P. Corder: 'Linguistic theory in applied linguistics' Brussels, AIMAV, 1973.

[3]S. Pit Corder. 'The Significance of Learners' Errors.' IRAL., Vol 5, 1967.

[4]G. Dykstra: An Investigation of New Concepts in Language Learning. Report of Project No. HE-084. U.S. Office of Education. 1967. See also F. Johnson, cited in footnote 5.

[5]Francis C. Johnson: English as a second language: an individualized approach. Jacaranda Press. 1973.

[6]C.A. Beeby: The Quality of Education in Developing Countries. London, Oxford University Press. 1966. I am indebted to Mr. Kevin J. Smith, M.A., for useful discussion of Beeby's ideas and their relevance to this theme.

TOPICS IN CULTURE LEARNING

Volume 2 1974

Edited by Richard W. Brislin

August 1974

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